

# higher education 2026

YOUR GUIDE TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HIGHER EDUCATION

## From cabin to campus: Simone trades high-flying life for studies



AFTER becoming a mother, Bundjalung and Wiradjuri woman Simone Roberts decided it was time to move on from her career as a flight attendant and focus on her passion for law.

Juggling her studies and single parenthood, Simone worried her dream of becoming a solicitor was slipping away because of the cost of living, including rent.

"I wanted to be a present parent for my child and not have to work to survive," Simone said.

"I was in class one day when someone asked me if I had heard of the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) Tertiary Accommodation Grant (TAG) – a grant which has literally changed my life."

TAG can help students with the cost of rent.

The AHO works with TAFE NSW and universities to provide eligible enrolled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with up to \$10,000 per year towards housing costs.

"This grant has helped alleviate my rental stress and get on top of my finances," Simone added.

**"It's the best program available to Mob studying. It has improved my life and kept a roof over our heads."**

"I now have a better work-life balance and can be present for my child's needs. We are eating better and I have noticed a massive improvement in both of our health and wellbeing."

With the pressure of rent eased, Simone can devote more time to her coursework and focus on progressing through her Juris Doctor degree at Macquarie University.

Growing up on the Block in Redfern, she has seen firsthand the mistreatment of her people and aspires to support Aboriginal families as a solicitor.

AHO Chief Executive Famey Williams said, "The cost of rent shouldn't stop our Mob from choosing to study, and these grants support students, like Simone, to achieve their educational goals."

"TAG is helping our future leaders succeed in studying a range of disciplines such as law, medicine, business, community services, education, science, tourism and engineering – just to name a few!"

"We have already helped more than 300 students, and we aren't stopping there. TAG applications remain open, and I encourage people to apply now for Semester 2."

Applications for Semester 2 2026 close Sunday 31 May 2026.

TAG provides funding of up to \$10,000 to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students studying a diploma or higher at NSW TAFE or university, to offset the cost of accommodation while they study. By helping overcome barriers that might get in the way of studying or applying to study, this grant aims to improve retention rates of existing students and increase enrolment of aspiring students.

TAG is a continuing initiative under the AHO's Strong Family, Strong Communities strategy, helping future leaders concentrate more on their studies and less on how they're going to pay rent.

If you're studying or thinking about studying, find out how TAG can help you by visiting [aho.nsw.gov.au/TAG](http://aho.nsw.gov.au/TAG)



Simone Roberts.

**"My passion for science has led me to want to learn more about clean water, renewable energy and looking after our environment. It would be great to give back to country and community."**

Sharni Morris is a proud Gamilaroi woman who is studying a Bachelor of Chemical Engineering at the University of Newcastle.

Thanks to a grant from the Aboriginal Housing Office, Sharni was able to safely relocate more than six hours from her family to pursue her studies.

**Eligible Mob studying at uni or TAFE NSW are encouraged to apply for up to \$10,000 in rental assistance before 31 May 2026.**



Scan the code to find out more and apply.

